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The University of Dayton

News Release

April 29, 1992

Contact: Rosemary Harty

EXECUTIVES PROBE SECRETS OF LEADERSHIP THROUGH UD HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

DAYTON, Ohio -- Why do the moral dilemmas of ancient Sparta and Athens hold lessons for the boardroom today? What wisdom from *Henry the V* or *Antigone* can a CEO apply to ethical decision-making in the 1990s?

Each spring at the University of Dayton, executives immerse themselves in a week of history, philosophy and literature designed to deepen their understanding of responsible leadership. Through conversation and study, they find that writings from 2,000 years ago have direct relevance to the problems of modern-day America.

The University of Dayton first invited executives to the Dayton Humanities Institute in 1989. The University remains one of a handful to offer in-depth seminars for business leaders. During the last three years, business leaders from Mead, EG&G Mound Applied Technologies and Bristol-Myers have taken the time to plunge into the humanities and emerge revitalized.

Material selected for the Dayton Humanities Institute has been drawn from classical and contemporary thinkers and writers and ultimately focuses on ponderous questions such as: Can ethical decision-makers be effective leaders? What is the source of a leader's authority? How do reason, selfishness and trust motivate people?

Paul Anderson, controller for Dayton Power & Light, found his experience in 1991 enriching. He ended his week at the Institute with a great deal to think about, and not all of it was directly related to his job as the utility's chief accounting officer.

"It was more a way to get away from specifically job-related things that you do during the day," Anderson said. "You can get your mind thinking about different aspects of life and be more reflective, more philosophical -- look at the broader picture."

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The 1992 seminar, scheduled for May 8-16, explores the ways different societies and their leaders have managed ethical issues involved with cultural diversity, freedom, quality, happiness and social justice. Among the authors read and discussed will be Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Gandhi and King.

In studying how the Melians decided to sacrifice their people to the ideal of freedom in refusing to surrender to Athens, business leaders gain new insights on the burdens of the few making decisions for many. Henry V's thoughts the night before the Battle of Agincourt lay the groundwork for a conversation on effective crisis management.

The simple premise behind the Institute is that leaders can benefit from the accumulated thinking of thousands of years, rather than relying solely on the wisdom and information of modern times, said Frank Henninger, director of the American Studies program and director of the Dayton Humanities Institute.

"To be successful in dealing with people, you have to understand them at their deepest levels, and with the most sophistication you can bring to bear," Henninger said. "The humanities teach us to reach those deepest levels and teach us how to be even more effective in working with people."

DP&L's Anderson read works he had never had the time to explore before, and he came away with timeless lessons that he says broadened his views.

"Those great authors had a lot to say -- you hope you can bring it to your whole life in general, not just to your job," he said.

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For interviews or more information on the Dayton Humanities Institute, contact **Frank Henninger** at (513) 229-3417.